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INSPECTION & WEIGHING UPDATE

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This special issue of the **Inspection and Weighing Update** is a round-up of significant program accomplishments of the Federal Grain Inspection Service for this calendar year.

DHV TESTING IS ELIMINATED

The mandatory testing for dark, hard, and vitreous (DHV) kernels will be eliminated as of Dec. 10 as a quality factor in the grading of hard red winter wheat under the U.S. Grain Standards Act. In the past buyers relied on DHV percentages as an indicator of quality in hard red winter wheat. However, the technology now exists for rapid, reliable and objective testing for protein, which is a better indication of baking quality than DHV percentages.

GRAIN INSPECTION ON HOURLY BASIS

Federal fees for original on-line grain inspection services were changed as of Dec. 2 to an hourly basis insted of the former unit rate. Travel fees were included in the hourly rate. The change is expected to result in decreased costs for some high-volume grain elevators and incresed costs for some lower volume grain elevators. The change is designed to result in fees that, as nearly as possible, cover the actual costs of providing the services. Elevators can also obtain reduced fees for specific periods if they contract with FGIS for inspection services in advance.

COMMODITY CARRIER INSPECTION REQUIRED

Ships, barges and other containers that carry agricultural commodities under Title II of the Public Law 480 (Food of Peace) program now must be inspected for condition by FGIS before being loaded. The inspection is to ensure that the shipping containers are clean, dry, free of insect infestation and odor, and in satisfactory condition to load and carry food.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE RE-ESTABLISHED

The Grain Standards Advisory Committee was re-established under USDA for an additional year of service. The 12-member committee was established by Congress to advise FGIS on implementing the extensive changes made in 1976 and 1977 in the U.S. Grain Standasrds Act. The committee was scheduled to disband after 18 months. However, Secretary Bergland asked the group to continue its work for another year as a departmental committee.

STANDARDIZATION MOVES TO K.C.

FGIS moved its Standardization Division to the Kansas City, Mo., area during the year, a move that affected 32 employees. The move is expected to expand the division's research capabilities. It is also now centrally located in one of the most important grain producing and marketing areas in the nation. The division is also now located near several groups that are important to its work.

INTERNATIONAL MONITORING TEAMS

International monitoring teams visited 21 countries located in the Far East, the Mediterranean Basin, and South and Central America. Some of the trips were made to answer specific complaints. Others were made to explain the U.S. Grain Inspection and Weighing system, and to inform foreign grain buyers how the system works to protect their interests. As a part of the process, FGIS monitoring teams explain the U.S. grain standards, identify differences between U.S. standards and standards of foreign nations, observe grain sampling techniques, equipment and facilities of foreign buyers, and observe practices which impact on U.S. grain quality as it is delivered.

PORTABLE WEIGH BEAM STUDIED

A special portable weigh beam that should cut test weight reverification costs for elevator operators has been acquired and is being tested for accuracy. This weigh beam will be used to check the accuracy of the test weights used to test official scales. It will permit the reverification of test weights that cannot be easily removed from the elevator and thus should cut costs of operations.

DESIGNATION IS COMPLETE

FGIS completed the process of designating state and private agencies to provide official inspection and weighing services at domestic locations. There are now 85 agencies that have been designated to perform such official services. Of these 85 agencies, 21 are states, eight of which are also delegated to perform official services at export locations.

FGIS SIGNS UNION CONTRACT

FGIS signed its first nationwide contract with an employee union. The contract is with the National Council of Federal Grain Inspection Locals, American Federation of Government employees. The 3-year contract will cover about 1,470 persons in FGIS field offices. It includes all FGIS workers in the field offices except for professional and supervisory employees.

SAFETY PROGRAM UNDER ADMINISTRATOR

The agency's safety program was placed under direct supervision of the Office of the Administrator. This change was made to emphasize the importance of the safety program and to provide a more responsive safety program to meet agency needs.

INTERIOR MARKET STUDY IS COMPLETE

FGIS completed its study of the performance of the interior market grain inspection and weighing systems. The study was required by the U.S. Grain Standards Act, as amended in 1976 and 1977. The first phase of the report dealt with an evaluation of FGIS management practices, operating procedures, and performance with respect to its supervision of official agencies designated to perform inspection and weighing services at interior locations. The second phase of the report presented the results of a survey of industry members who were using official grain inspection and weighing services. Data collected for 1978 confirms that the grain handling facility operators and managers surveyed are generally satisfied with the services provided in the inland terminal marketing areas even though various problems persist in the system.